

Fulbright Views 'Total Victory'

By WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, challenged "total victory" as an attainable or even desirable goal in a speech delivered on the occasion of receiving an honorary degree from Tufts University. It was the first of a series of three William L. Clayton lectures, presented annually under the auspices of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy, attached to Tufts.

In a scholarly address, studded with quotations from Gibbon, Woodrow Wilson and George Kennan, Sen. Fulbright posed the question of how such a victory is to be won. Is this to come about through some brilliant stroke of diplomacy that has thus far eluded us, by rational arguments of such devastating logic that the Communists will be persuaded to abandon their expansionist policies? "Or is 'total victory' to be won by a nuclear war which at the very least would cost the lives of tens of millions of people on both sides, devastate most or all of our great cities and mutilate or utterly destroy our civilization?"

Disillusioning Aftermaths

Pursuing this line of reasoning further, Sen. Fulbright recalled the disillusioning aftermaths of the "total victories" achieved in the two great world wars of this century, mentioning incidentally the Civil War and the subsequent reconstruction era, leading up to the searching question:

"Are we really certain that we have the incalculable qualitative resources of wisdom, vision and compassion with which to reconstruct the world according to the specifications of absolute morality? To answer this question in the affirmative would require a degree of moral and intellectual arrogance that would do credit to the most fanatical and unreconstructed Marxist ideologue."

With war ruled out except as a desperate and unavoidable last resort, Sen. Fulbright suggested three ways in which the West should encourage the Soviet rulers to pursue courses of moderation:

First, maintain such strength that any departure from moderation on the Soviet side would involve unacceptable risks.

Second, make it clear that it is not communism, but Communist imperialism that is an issue between the Soviet Union and the West, that the Soviet Union, insofar as it renounces expansionist and subversive ambitions, can enjoy a safe and honorable national life without threat from the West.

Third, the West, by utilizing and unifying its immense human and material resources, can so strengthen the free societies as to make them impregnable against outside ideological assault and magnetic examples of social justice and material well-being.

Of these three points, the first would seem to rule out one-sided concessions or heavy disarmament agreements. The second conveys an impression of beating on an open

door. At no time since the feeble and hazardous interventionist efforts of 1918 and 1919 has there been any attempt on the part of the West to upset the Soviet political and economic system.

With the Soviet state in the latter part of the fifth decade of its existence, "restoration" of some pre-Soviet model would be sheer fantasy and is not a design taken seriously by any Western statesman. To most Russians both the Czarist Empire and the brief disorderly interval of very ineffectual democracy between the fall of the Czar and the coming of the Soviets are very dim memories.

Europe's Political Cohesion

As for the third point, Europe has so far strengthened in political cohesion and material prosperity as to offer few, if any weak spots for Communist subversion. This is not equally true for the politically immature and economically retarded parts of the world. Nor is there yet full agreement as to how the goal of Western union is to be realized.

Sen. Fulbright's deliberate challenges to "total victory" as a feasible or even desirable goal may arouse criticism among the impatient. But there is a good deal of historical logic on his side. It can certainly be argued that the ultimate consequences would have been preferable if Woodrow Wilson's appeal to reason, his call for a "peace without victory" in January 1917 had been accepted by both belligerent camps. American political warfare in World War II would have stood a far better chance of success if the vain-glorious slogan, "Unconditional Surrender," had never been proclaimed. The likelihood of being able militarily to crush the Soviet Union and Red China without sustaining "unacceptable" losses in the process is slim.

The principal question that arises in connection with Sen. Fulbright's moderate and reasonable statement of the United States attitude vis-a-vis the Soviet Union is whether similar attitudes will prevail on the other side of the Iron Curtain. When he suggests that the Soviet Union "repounce expansionist and subversive ambitions" he is asking that Communists cease to be Communists. This may happen; but until there is some conclusive evidence, not yet forthcoming, America can only forego vigilance and maintenance of its security, perhaps to its existence.